



United States Mint Announces “Return to Monticello” for 2006 Nickel

July 28, 2005

SAN FRANCISCO — The United States Mint announced today that the 1938 classic rendition of President Thomas Jefferson’s Virginia home of Monticello by Felix Schlag will return to the reverse of the Nation’s 2006 nickel. However, the design will be crisper and more detailed than Americans have seen it in recent years, having been carefully restored by United States Mint Sculptor–Engraver John Mercanti, using Schlag’s original artwork. Over more than 65 years of production, the United States Mint had slightly modified the design for technical reasons, such as die life extension. But now the Nation’s five–cent coin will display more of Schlag’s artistry.

“Numismatists who examine the new 2006 nickel carefully will see an image that is now closer to the detail that Schlag intended,” said United States Mint Associate Director for Sales and Marketing, Gloria Eskridge, at a media availability during the American Numismatic Association’s World’s Fair of Money.

“I strengthened the architecture of the image and re–established elements that reflect the original Schlag model,” explained Sculptor–Engraver Mercanti. “For instance, the facets of the dome of Monticello had just disappeared on the nickel over the years. They are back now.”

Among the changes discussed by Ms. Eskridge and Mr. Mercanti were:

Facets of the dome of Monticello have been restored.

The balconies of the building have been reworked.

The detail around the door and windows has been incised and restored.

The 2006 nickel, “Return to Monticello,” is the last in the United States Mint’s Westward Journey Nickel Series™ and signifies both the return of the Lewis & Clark Expedition from its 8,000 mile journey and the return of the Nation’s nickel to the reverse design of Monticello. A law passed by Congress and approved by President Bush in 2003 authorized the redesign of the Nation’s five–cent coin for the first time since 1938, when Felix Schlag won \$1000 for his plaster models of the Jefferson nickel. He later submitted line drawings. The United States Mint used both in its restoration effort.

The Westward Journey Nickel Series, commemorating the bicentennials of the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis & Clark Expedition began in 2004 with the Peace Medal nickel, followed by the Keelboat nickel. This year, the United States Mint released the American Bison nickel to be followed by the Ocean in View nickel on August 1, 2005. The United States Mint will officially present the Ocean in View nickel to the American people on August 5, 2005, at Cape Disappointment in Washington State.

The new obverse of the 2006 five–cent coin will be announced later this year.

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